

INFORMATION LINK

Information Services Division

July 1997

A source of information for our customers

Volume 97, Issue 3

Client Server

CORNERSTONE CLASS LIBRARY

Vern Welder

PowerBuilder version 5.0 moved ISD into the realm of object oriented application development. We started developing our own objects to extend the PowerBuilder Foundation Class library (PFC), but soon discovered that Financial Dynamics Inc. had already created a large library of PowerBuilder objects within a product called CornerStone. ISD purchased CornerStone to save the time and effort required to develop our own object library.

CornerStone provides a rich selection of development services and templates that save our developers' time. It helps us develop applications that are consistent, thus easier to maintain. CornerStone also reduces the PFC learning curve for developers.

We have been pleased with CornerStone's performance and its variety of features. If you would like more information about CornerStone, access www.findyn.com.

SCHEDULED CHANGES

Vern Welder

ISD uses e-mail to notify customers of system enhancements or work projects that may affect their computer and/or communication services. To supplement the e-mail process, we have added a link to our WWW home page that lists all of ISD's scheduled changes. Visit our home page at <http://www.state.nd.us/isd/> and select 'Scheduled Changes' to view the

change list. Currently the list is short, as we have just started logging changes. We expect to retain about 6 months of history as the information accumulates. Scheduled change data is stored on an Oracle database.

Our next project will be activation of the 'ISD Meetings' link. That is a WWW link from ISD's home page that lists meetings such as DP coordinator meetings, telephone coordinator meetings, vendor presentations, etc. Watch for this in late June.

Information Resource Center

AS/400 ADOPTS WWW FRONT END

Sam Stoxen

The World Wide Web has become the fastest growing Internet service and the AS/400 has followed the mainframe in allowing access by this method. Not only does it have a WWW access method, but there are several possibilities for using the WWW to access the AS/400.

First, the AS/400 can offer regular hypertext screens to the Internet. This has been turned on for our AS/400. The problem is that someone must do a little programming to create a screen that can be viewed from a WWW browser. So far, this has not happened.

Second, the AS/400 has a product called a 5250 HTML Work Station Gateway. This product takes a regular AS/400 screen and converts it to be viewed directly by a web browser. The sign-on screen and all others have buttons for all of the keys that can be used by the native screen. This allows a user to do all functions that they would

normally do on the 400 from the web browser. The only problem is the screen has been expanded to show the screen and the keys. This means it is larger than what can be viewed in one screen.

Lastly, there is a product that will present a 'JAVA' screen to show the 400 screen. This works fairly well but requires a very current browser and does not allow printing from the 400. This is a purchased product and is adding new features to the more current versions of the product. The first two products are free with the AS/400.

If you would like to see a demonstration of the current options, contact Gloria Bohl at ISD at 328-4772 or send her an e-mail message.

E-MAIL GUIDELINES

Gary J. Vetter

There is no question that E-Mail can allow us to be more productive. However, a few basic guidelines can help to insure that this ever growing form of communication does not become too chaotic. Consider the following:

- Always include a short, descriptive 'Subject'.
- Try to keep messages brief enough to fit on one screen.
- Avoid excessive use of fonts and colors.
- Type in mixed case. All caps is considered 'shouting'.
- When 'Replying', only include the original message text when it is necessary to clarify your response.
- Use urgent, delivery, and read

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notifications sparingly.

- Resist from sending large attachments, especially to groups of people.
- When sending to the Internet, always include your return E-mail address in your message.
- Consider that the software capabilities of your recipients may be different from yours.
- By default, do not save all of the messages you send.
- Periodically review your folders and delete unneeded messages.
- If your E-Mail program supports 'rules', use them to help organize incoming messages.
- Be selective about your recipients. Avoid mass mailings.
- Password protect your E-Mail program.
- If you receive an E-Mail 'Chain Letter', NEVER, NEVER, NEVER forward it!
- Instead of sending an attachment that contains only unformatted text, send the text in the body of the message.
- If your E-Mail program allows RTF formatting (such as bold, underline, italics, fonts, and colors), avoid using these features unless you are sending to a person who can accept RTF formatting. Otherwise, unreadable characters will appear in the message they receive.
- If you belong to an electronic discussion group (LISTSERV) that generates a large amount of E-Mail, consider using the 'digest' option to consolidate all of the messages into a single, daily distribution.
- Review your agency's E-Mail usage policy.
- Any messages regarding donuts or birthday cake should include Gary J. Vetter in the recipient list (msmail.gv22@ranch.state.nd.us).

E-MAIL VIRUS HOAX

Gary J. Vetter

Warnings of viruses that can be spread by reading an E-Mail message are on the rise. Please do not forward these messages to the people you know. They are false.

The US Department of Energy maintains a Web site that contains computer related

advisories. One link that is of particular interest is their Internet Hoax Page (<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACHoaxes.html>).

It maintains that computer viruses can't be activated simply by *reading* an E-mail message. Instead, viruses would have to be mailed and executed as an attachment. The US Department of Energy still affirms that reading E-mail, using typical mail agents, can't activate malicious code delivered in or with the message. It is always recommended that attachments be scanned with virus software prior to running them on your computer. Note that antivirus software can't protect you from all viruses. It is always helpful to know where your software comes from before executing it.

BROWSING THE NET IS FILLING UP YOUR HARD DRIVE!

Esther Norgard

If you use Netscape to browse the Internet, you may discover that a directory under Netscape called Cache is growing by leaps and bounds. If you use Inbox with Windows 95, the directory to check might be the Temporary Internet Files directory under Windows.

Every time you access a web page, copies of the page and its graphics are stored on your hard drive. The benefit of having them stored is that the page will load faster from the Cache then downloading it from the web each time. However, these files can pile up if you're not aware of them. A single trip to a home page can add dozens of files and mbs to this directory.

You can delete them anytime with no problems. In Netscape the proper way to do that is to click on Options/Network Preferences/Cache and click on flush cache. You can limit the size of this cache in this same area of the options menu.

BITS OF INFORMATION

Esther Norgard

Word 97

Word 8 files are not compatible with Word 6/7. If someone using Word 8

(Word 97) shares files with someone using Word 6 or 7, those using 6/7 will need a converter. There is a file called WRD97CNV available on the Internet that will do the trick. It needs to be installed by the users of Word 6/7, and will enable them to read files created in Word 8. The address is <http://www.microsoft.com/word/freestuff/converters/wrd97cv.htm>.

Excel 97

There are inconsistencies when running Excel 7.0 macros under Excel 8 (Excel 97). Microsoft has acknowledged there is a bug in Excel 97 that causes the problem. However, Microsoft says they may not fix the bug unless they get a lot of complaints, so it helps to be forewarned that there may be some difficulties with macros.

Records Management

OPEN, CLOSED, CONFIDENTIAL, OR EXEMPT... WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

Becky Lingle and Sharon Freeman

Due to recent changes in the Open Records Law regarding personal information, we have received a few calls inquiring about personnel records and confidentiality.

The Open Records Law can be found under North Dakota Century Code section 44-04-18. Basically, the law states that all records of public or governmental bodies are open and accessible for inspection, unless otherwise specifically provided by law.

Section 44-04-18.1 was amended to add an exception that personal information maintained in an employee's personnel file is exempt. According to the law, "personal information" includes a person's home address; home telephone number; photograph; medical information; motor vehicle operator's identification number; social security number; payroll deduction information; the name, address, telephone number, date of birth, and social security number of any dependent or emergency contact; any credit, debit, or electronic fund transfer card number; and any account number at a bank or other financial institution.

So, what is the difference between closed, confidential, and exempt? Public disclosure of confidential information is prohibited. Exempt records are not required to be disclosed, but are not prohibited from being open. The public entity has the discretion to determine whether to open or close exempt records. Closed records are exempt records that have not been opened to the public.



DP UPDATE

Joe Wolf

On May 18, 1997, ISD moved all the workload back to one large mainframe - an IBM 9672-R64 CMOS Processor. Prior to this date, we were running most large applications on the ES9000/740 and a few applications on a smaller CMOS processor. Shortly after the conversion, the ES9000/740 was shut down, dismantled, and removed. The new CMOS processor has performed well since the conversion and has many advantages over the ES9000/740 water cooled processor. Advantages of the CMOS are: air-cooled, reduces floor space by 85%, reduces energy consumption by 90%, and boasts system performance.

Over the last few months we had two retirements in the Data Processing Section. Lloyd Miller, Data Base Administrator, retired on April 30, 1997. On May 30, 1997, Pete Weissman, Programming Manager retired. Marlys Jangula is the new Programming Manager.

Telecommunications

DIVORCE IN THE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Jim Gaarder

US West and AT&T are fighting about your calling card business. The companies used to work together to process and bill for telephone calls placed on each other's calling cards. It allowed AT&T customers to dial zero, then tell the US West operator who answered to bill the call to an AT&T card. That stopped at the end of the day May 31, 1997, when

the contract between AT&T and US West expired. An AT&T spokesperson said it is a competitive decision made because the company can now carry all such calls on its own network. If you dial zero and tell the US West operator that you want to charge the call to an AT&T calling card, the operator will refuse, but will offer to put the call through on another calling card or credit card. **What does this mean to state employees using state AT&T credit cards? Read the article on AT&T CALLING CARD ACCESS NUMBER.**

AT&T CALLING CARD ACCESS NUMBER 800-555-8422

Jim Gaarder

ISD has implemented a single toll-free number for all state agencies to use when making a call with a state assigned AT&T calling card. By using this service the call will be carried by AT&T through the state's Software Defined Network (SDN). Implementing this has resulted in cost

savings to all agencies. The cost savings are realized in both the per-minute calling rate and the one-time surcharge on each call. Also, there are no per-minute usage charges being billed to ISD or any state agency. This service is implemented on all existing State of North Dakota AT&T calling cards.

To make a call using this 800 number, the card holder first dials the assigned **1-800-555-8422** number, which will connect to the state SDN. At this point the caller will hear a voice prompt with instructions to "Please enter the number you are calling." After entering the 10-digit destination number, you will hear a second voice prompt with instructions to "Please enter your calling card number." After entering your 14-digit, state assigned calling card number, your call will be processed. By using this special 1-800 number, the State gets significant savings and this is now the best way to call long distance for State calling card holders. A letter dated May 9, 1996 was sent to all department or agency heads by Dorothy Vetter of ISD explaining this service. If you have questions, please call Jim Gaarder 328-3713.



CUSTOMER WORK REQUESTS ON ISD HOME PAGE

Cindy Kemmet

Currently under construction on ISD's home page (www.state.nd.us/isd) is a new selection called **Work Orders**. This will allow authorized DP Coordinators who are responsible for requesting administrative changes to submit them on-line from one standardized location. There will be four Work Request forms you can choose from, they include **IP Addressing, E-Mail, Security, and Terminal/Printer** changes. Access to this page will be security protected with an access code given to those DP Coordinators who wish to use this new page.

The good news is that you will no longer have to know exactly who to contact or figure out which form is needed to submit your request. You will simply fill out the requested information on the web page and click on submit. The Work Request forms you complete, either **IP Addressing, E-Mail, Security, or Terminal/Printer** changes, will be routed to the appropriate section of ISD for completion. Noted at the top of each Work Request form will be a statement, telling you when you can expect your request to be completed. If you have any questions as to the status of your request once it is submitted, you will simply contact the ISD Support Center, we will check for you and get back to you with a status.

More information will be distributed to agency coordinators when 'Work Orders' is ready to go live on our home page. We hope you will find this new option of requesting work orders easy to use and more efficient. If you have any questions, please e-mail me at kemmet@pioneer.state.nd.us or call me 701-328-3003.

ISD EMPLOYEE PROFILE



Name: Lynette Goroski

Job Title: Information Resource Specialist III

Job Responsibilities: Provide PC and network technical support to state agencies.

Years of Service: 5

Educational Background: Associate in Business Administration, Bismarck State College; Bachelor in Computer Information Systems, University of Mary.

Who do you consider to be your customer? Any state agency requiring the services of the ISD Information Resource Center.



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